Merton Walks,

OR THE

Oxford Beauties,

A

POEM.

Eſt quoqae Carminibus meritas celebrare Puellas
Dos mea -----

------ *Utinam modò dicere poſſem*
Carmina digna Deâ, certè eſt Dea Carmine digna!

OXFORD, Printed for *Edw. Whiſtler* Bookſeller, and are to be ſold by J. *Knapton*, H. *Clements*, W. *Smith* Bookſellers in LONDON, 1717.
Price Six Pence.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

Oxford Beauties.

LONG in *Auguſta*'s Courts had *Venus* reign'd,
And *Britiſh* Eyes *Love*'s Empire long maintain'd;
In ev'ry Age ſome beauteous *Mira* ſhines
With Heav'nly Charms to grace the Poet's Lines:
All Things alaſs! expect a certain Date,
Fate governs All, and *Love* muſt yield to Fate.
From diſtant Climes a Savage Race muſt riſe,
And *Albion*'s Heroes yield to G-----*n* Eyes;

Fir'd with Diſdain the Goddeſs urg'd her Flight
(What *Britiſh* Heart cou'd bear the odious Sight!)
To ſeek ſome happier Region, that might prove
A Manſion fit for *Venus*, fit for *Love*;
Where faithful Slaves her Laws ſhou'd ſtill obey,
And *Engliſh* Beauty ſtill maintain it's Sway.

With anxious Care o'er *Albion*'s Cliffs She paſt,
On each bright Scene her radiant Eyes She caſt,
'Till *Rhedecyna*'s Tow'rs obtain'd her View at laſt.
The Goddeſs paus'd; And, raviſh'd with Delight,
With ſilent Joy dwelt on the glorious Sight.
A Thouſand beauteous Nymphs She Here beheld,
Who All, her much-lov'd *Greece* cou'd boaſt, excell'd;
A Thouſand ſportive Youths, contriv'd for Joy,
As her *Adonis* fair, but not ſo coy;

Nor

Nor ſtay'd She long to chuſe, with Rapture fir'd
(She All had ſeen, and All She'ad ſeen admir'd)
Where there were Youths ſo bright, and Nymphs ſo fair,
'Twas fitting She ſhou'd fix *Love*'s Empire There.

Ye charming Nymphs! Who grace th' *Oxonian* Plains,
Your Queen obey! Your *Cytherea* reigns!
May no fond Youth disdainful Beauty find!
No killing Scorn! but as You're fair, be kind!
Let tender Looks, and ſoft Compaſſion prove
The Queen of *Beauty* is the Queen of *Love*!

But whither flies the too preſumptuous Muſe!
What Nymph, what radiant Charmer wilt Thou chuſe?
Who firſt, Who laſt, deſerves the Poet's Lays,
Where ev'ry Fair tranſcends his higheſt Praiſe?

O!

O! cou'd the Bard but boaſt an equal Flame,
Bright as Thoſe Eyes which give the glorious [Theme,
How wou'd He ſoar, and raiſe his tuneful Voice
In Numbers not unequal to his Choice!
But if He ſinks beneath the mighty Weight,
Lay all the Blame on Him, nor think Their Charms [leſs great.

Let bright *Brunetta*'s Praiſe begin the Song!
This to *Brunetta* does of Right belong:
She firſt with Heav'nly Flame the Poet fir'd,
She firſt commands the Lays Her Charms inſpir'd.
In Her, with dazling Light ſurpriz'd, We find
That Beauty to no Colour is confin'd;
Too ſure to kill 'twill different Ways employ;
The *Fair*, the *Brown*, All equally deſtroy!

For

For Charms leſs bright the Happy *Roman* fought,
Gave the whole World, nor thought Them dearly [bought;
Cou'd *Cleopatra* Half That Beauty boaſt,
Her *Eyes* had conquer'd, what His *Arms* had loſt!

And can the Muſe of Beauty dare to ſing,
And not one Verſe to *Eleonora* bring!
Bright *Eleonora*! Whoſe exalted Name
So oft' has been the Poet's boaſted Theme!
But ah! how fickle ev'ry Human State!
Of all Things fair Below how ſhort the Date!
The ſweeteſt Flow'rs the ſooneſt grow decay'd,
Soon droop the Lillies, ſoon the Roſes fade!
The envious Gods at length being jealous grown
To ſee a *Mortal* Pow'r ſurpaſs their *Own*,

Finding

Finding leſs Incenſe on their Altars laid,
And all our Vows to *Rival Beauty* paid,
Snatch'd from Us the beſt Gift, They e'er had giv'n,
The richeſt Work, the *Maſter-Piece* of Heav'n!
Where were Ye then, Ye Bards! no Numbers flow?
No plaintive Verſe to tell the mighty Woe?
Each *Vulgar* Beauty claims the Poet's Lays
To ſing of *Delia*'s Loſs, and *Delia*'s Praiſe;
The God of Verſe Himſelf her Fate muſt mourn,
And little weeping *Loves* attend her Urn;
But above All ſee *Venus*' Sorrows riſe!
Her Empire's loſt when any Fair One dies!
A common Ill may meet with ſome Relief,
And ſoft Complainings ſooth a moderate Grief;

But when our Paſſion riſes to Exceſs,
No Tongue can tell it, and no Words expreſs,
We'ad ſhown more Sorrow, had our Loſs been leſs!
This Praiſe, tho' late, lamented Shade, receive!
An empty Gift! 'tis All the *Muſe* can give!

But ſee! Another *B-----y*, Heav'nly fair,
Recruits the Day, and chears the dusky Air!
Again the drooping Goddeſs prunes her Wings,
Aloft She mounts when She of *Celia* ſings!
Hear the *Old Bard* in never-dying Verſe
Confeſs Love's Pow'r, and Beauty's Praiſe rehearſe!
Well may the gentle *Celia* learn ſome Pride
(* *Celia is Miſtreſs of all Charms beſide*)

---

* Alluding to a Copy of Verſes to Her under the Name of *Celia*, beginning,

Prithee Celia *get ſome Pride,*
Celia *has all Charms beſide.*

Whoſe radiant Eyes cou'd raiſe Youth's ſprightly Fire,
The Coldeſt warm, and Age it ſelf inſpire!

* Before *Troy*'s Counſellors with ſuch a Mien,
Such Heav'nly Looks, appear'd the *Spartan* Queen;
Tho' froze with Years They own'd Love's powerful Charms,
Such Beauty well might ſet the World in Arms!

Prudence perſuades the fatal Fair away,
But *Love*, Almighty *Love*, commands her Stay:
Had *Celia* then been there, the amorous Boy
Had ſent th' Adultreſs back, and ſav'd his *Troy*.

If any Charms can ſave from *B----y*'s *Eyes*,
In *T-----l*'s *Shape* the wondrous Magic lies;

---

* See *Pope*'s Homer *Il.* 3 *v.* 203. and the Notes.

Of

Of Fate ſecure *They* ſingly conquer ſtill,
And only when together fail to kill;
Such *Rival* Graces in each Fair We ſpy,
The Lover knows not at whoſe Feet to die.
Of *Ida*'s Hill no more let Poets ſing,
And from the Skies contending *Beauties* bring;
In *Merton* Groves a nobler Strife is ſeen,
A Claim more doubtful, and a brighter Scene;
Had equal Glories, equal Charms, been giv'n
To *Jove*'s bright Offspring, or the Queen of Heav'n,
Belinda's *Mien*, or *Celia*'s ſparkling *Eyes*,
Not *Venus'* ſelf had gain'd the Golden Prize.

O! *H---rr---s*! Who that Heav'nly Form can ſee,
That Crowd of Charms, and not thy Captive be!

The *Sun*, when mounted his Meridian Height,
Seems not ſo fair, and ſhines not half ſo bright.
From *Winton*'s Tow'rs the lovely Robber came,
Like *Philip*'s Son, to conquer but for Fame;
A Thouſand Triumphs won are all too few,
And, One World gain'd, She wiſhes ſtill for New.
O! ſweet Captivity! O! glorious Chains!
Who wou'd be free where ſuch a Victor reigns?
We're more than Princes when we ſighing lie,
And taſte of Heav'n while at Her Feet We die.

Behold how ſwift the forky Lightning flies,
How fierce it ſtrikes! Then look on *P----y*'s Eyes!
Where e'er They dart their Beams, of Fate ſecure,
They pierce as quickly, and They wound as ſure.

As

As ſome new Star more eminently bright,
Forc'd from it's Vortex, with ſuperior Light
A while augments the Glories of the Night;
With height'ned Charms ſo *J--nn--gs* did appear,
Juſt bleſs'd our Eyes, then left our *Hemiſphere.*
Ye radiant Fair! Who *ſtill* Your Pow'r maintain,
Well may You triumph, and ſecurely reign;
Nor e'er ſuſpect Your Slaves are giv'n to range,
Who *J---nn---gs* ſaw unmov'd, can never change!

When his fam'd Piece the great *Apelles* drew,
He ſummon'd all the *Græcian* Nymphs to View,
From ev'ry Fair ſome killing Charm He took,
Theſe Lips, That Mien, This Shape, That radiant [Look;
Had *H---yw---d* then among the Reſt been ſeen,
Without *Their* Aid He'ad form'd his *Cyprian* Queen;

For

For all Perfections meet in Her alone,
Where *H---yw---d* is, is ev'ry Fair in *One.*

In tender *L---w* the different Seaſons meet,
Ripe as the *Autumn*, and as *April* ſweet;
What height'ned Charms the blooming Fair adorn!
She ſhews a *Noon* while yet 'tis bluſhing *Morn.*
Ah! when the *Morning Dawn* appears ſo bright,
How will She charm in full *Meridian Light*!
Ev'n now, too conſcious of her Pow'r, She tries
The op'ning Vigor of Thoſe ſparkling Eyes;
Ev'n now She ſhoots around deſtructive Rays,
Scatters a Thouſand Deaths, a Thouſand Lovers [ſlays.
On *Woodſtock* Plains when late She bleſs'd the Race,
How did our Youth gaze on That charming Face!

The winged Courſers paſs unheeded by,
For who cou'd look on Them, when *L---w* was [nigh!
O'er all the Field We ſeek Her glitt'ring Car,
Regardleſs of the Prize, and fix with Wonder There.

So when the Train of Goddeſſes on High
In their bright Chariots trace the liquid Sky,
In all their Pomp, to viſit mighty *Jove*,
Such in her Car appears the *Queen* of *Love*;
Such Beams of Light around the Goddeſs play,
And add new Glories to the *Milky-Way*.

O! *Woodſtock*! too unhappy, bleſs'd, Retreat!
Of Love and Glory ſtill the bliſsful Seat!
Henceforth ſhall old *Arcadia* boaſt in vain
Her Sylvan Chaces, and her Virgin Train;

Nor

Nor envy Thou; Upon thy Plains We've ſeen
A Sport more noble, and a brighter Scene;
What Crowds of matchleſs Nymphs around ap-
[pear!
Not thy own *Roſamond* was half ſo fair:
Cou'd *Henry*'s Miſtreſs boaſt but Half Thoſe
[Charms,
The injur'd Queen had drop'd her vengeful Arms;
Such Heav'nly Looks, ſuch Beauty might aſſwage
Ev'n Jealous Envy, and a *Female* Rage!

But whence Theſe Clouds on radiant *Aſ---re*'s
[Brow,
So ſweetly calm, and ſo ſerene 'till now?
From Love forſaken? or her injur'd Fame?
Gods! cou'd the Traytor blacken *Aſ---re*'s Name!
And is it *Thus* We Beauty's Pow'r adore!
Has generous Love no Charms ------ or Riches
[more?

Gold

Gold makes th' Ignoble, Brave; the Coward, Strong;
Gold makes th' Unhandſome, Fair; *Gold* makes the
[*Widow* Young!
O! riſe (grant Heav'n!) ſome generous Patriot riſe;
Aſſiſt th' Oppreſs'd; the Inſolent chaſtiſe;
Set clear her Virtues; ſave the trembling Fair;
Beauty diſtreſs'd deſerves a Patriot's Care!
'Tis done, 'tis done; We all with wiſh'd Applauſe
Abſolve the Fair, and own ſoft Beauty's Cauſe:
That Face, Thoſe Eyes, alone might well prevail,
But when with Juſtice joyn'd cou'd never fail,
Where *Cheſhire* pleads, and PARKER holds the
[Scale.

Where *H---mm---d* is, with ev'ry Beauty crown'd,
A Thouſand *Cupids* ſcatter Deaths around;
With certain Speed the feather'd Miſchiefs fly,
And at One Glance a Thouſand Lovers die.

See how fair *Br----ks* attracts our wond'ring [Sight!
Amidſt a Thouſand eminently bright!
Not more diſtinguiſh'd by her killing Eyes,
Than by her tow'ring Height, and graceful Size!
As the tall *Cedar*, branching from above,
O'erlooks the Wood, the Glory of the Grove;
Tho' Crowds of wondrous Nymphs around ap- [pear,
We paſs o'er all the Reſt, and fix with Pleaſure [Here.

So when *Diana* on the Woodland Plain,
Joyns in the Dance amidſt her Virgin Train,
By riſing Charms the Goddeſs ſtands confeſs'd,
Superior by the Head to all the Reſt.

In tender *N---wl---n* ev'ry Grace We find,
Deſtructive Charms with ſoft Compaſſion joyn'd;

Low

Low at her Feet while *Thouſands* make their [Moan,
She only grieves that She can ſave but *One.*

Hail *Dorothea*! Heav'nly fair! in Thee
Again We blooming *Sachariſſa* ſee!
Alike in Beauty, and alike in Name,
To *Waller*'s Theme, alike ſhou'd be thy Fame,
Were I Partaker of an equal Flame!

But ah! where *Waller*'s Muſe firſt ſtretch'd her [Wing,
What Bard ſhall after *Granville* dare to ſing?

F---dd---ſs by Nature ſeems for Love deſign'd,
To fire the World, and rule o'er all Mankind.
What blooming Charms our raviſh'd Senſes greet!
The Lillies and the Roſes blended meet:
Their various Beauties in her Cheeks appear,
But *Theſe* not half ſo ſweet, nor *Thoſe* ſo fair.

What Heart ſo proud as to reſiſt her Charms,
The Coldeſt Breaſt ſuch Heav'nly Beauty warms;
A Thouſand ſlain, a Thouſand ſtill crowd on,
Gaze on Her Eyes, tho' ſure to be undone.

So ſome fond Youth with Scorn the Race eſpies,
Where *Death*, or *Atalanta*, was the Prize.
"Is Love ſo ſweet? or is our Madneſs ſuch?
"So trifling Life? or Beauty worth ſo much?
But when at laſt He ſaw the blooming Fair
With height'ned Charms from Conqueſt won ap-
[pear,
How did He gaze, and on each Beauty dwell,
And envy ev'ry Happy Youth, that fell!
Quick towards the fatal Goal He ſtarts, He flies,
But diſtanc'd at the laſt He nobly dies
Love's glorious Victim, Beauty's Sacrifice.

In

In *Merton* Walks when charming *Wh---te* is ſeen,
In *Cyprian* Shades We view ſoft Beauty's Queen;
So blooming bright, and ſo Divinely fair,
Her Geſture ſuch, and ſuch her charming Air.
Where-e'er She treads unnumber'd Sweets ariſe,
And double Glory gilds the bright'ning Skies:
In vain, Ye Groves! You All your Shades oppoſe,
No Screen from Love the panting Lover knows;
Thro' thickeſt Gloom the piercing Lightnings flie,
With Joy We gaze, but as We gaze We die.

All that is ſweet in *H---yw---rd*'s Form We find;
Ah! how unlike her too relentleſs Mind!
* *Hear, cruel Fair, a dying Lover's Moan!*
O! come, and ſave thy Swain ----- but come Alone!

---

* Alluding to a Letter deſiring Her to come to a Gentleman's Chamber (to Whom She had never ſpoken) but be ſure to bring no Body with Her.

Cou'd

Cou'd the coy Maid reject ſuch Heav'nly Charms!
From Youth, and Beauty fly! from *P*----'s Arms!
Rough *Vulcan* ſu'd, and won, the *Queen* of *Love*;
Can *P*---- leſs moving than rough *Vulcan* prove?
Well did'ſt Thou bid the guilty Houſe to ſhake;
And Windows rattle for their Miſtreſs' Sake;
What tho' the World muſt clear the faultleſs Dame,
And Thou in vain wou'd'ſt taint her injur'd Fame?
What tho' Thou dread'ſt at laſt the partial Laws,
And poorly ſu'ſt to ſtop th' impending *Cauſe*?
Yet ſtill thy Name (if Verſe a Name can give)
Thy Youth, and Beauty, ſhall for ever live!

Who can to *B---ſs---t* Praiſe proportion'd bring?
What Heart her Pow'r reſiſt? what Numbers ſing?

That

That Face Alone might challenge All our Lays,
Did not her matchleſs Shape claim equal Praiſe;
So many Infinite Perfections joyn,
We know not Which to chuſe, but ſee Them All
[Divine.

Imagine Something exquiſitely wrought,
Compleatly finiſh'd, to Perfection brought!
More bright, than ever Youthful Poet feign'd!
More bright, than e'er in Lover's Fancy reign'd!
To *Celia*'s Face, *Belinda*'s Geſture joyn'd;
To *B---ſs---t*'s Shape, ſoft *Dorothea*'s Mind;
To *Cyprian* ſweetneſs, *Juno*'s awful Air,
Then look on *Wr---ght*, You'll find ſtill greater
[Wonders There.

Of radiant *Tr---ghs* fain wou'd the Goddeſs ſing,
But dreads the Flight, and feels her flagging Wing;

Yet

Yet on, my Muſe! no Numbers can depreſs
That Beauty, which no Numbers can expreſs!
Such Charms wou'd tow'r above the higheſt Lays,
Elude the Poet's Toil, and mock his diſtant Praiſe.
See fair *Maria*! how in Charms compleat!
As *Juno* graceful! and as *Venus* ſweet!
What tender Looks adorn the killing Fair!
How ſoft, how languiſhing, her ev'ry Air!
As ſome kind Angel, from the Realms above
Sent down to miniſter the Wrath of *Jove*,
Friend to Mankind, and pitying Human Woe;
She ſeems unwilling to preſent the Blow:
In riſing Smiles ſome Glimpſe of Joy We gain,
But find, too ſoon, the flattering Proſpect vain,
Succeeding Frowns th' imagin'd Bliſs deſtroy,
Chill all our Hopes, and blaſt the promis'd Joy.

S

So when the Seas grow calm, the Winter o'er,
The ventrous Saylor quits the lazy Shore,
Mild and ſerene ſees all around appear,
(Too true an Emblem of the treacherous Fair!)
When on a ſudden guſty Storms ariſe,
And thick'ning Tempeſts blacken all the Skies;
In ſad Deſpair the Scene now chang'd He views,
Winds ruſtle, foam the Billows, and the Wreck
[enſues.

But *Margarita*, of Succeſs ſecure,
In open Fight aſſerts her conquering Pow'r;
No Glimpſe of Joy, no flattering Hopes We try,
She calls her Beauties forth, and bids her Lovers
[die.
Oh! why, too cruel Pow'rs! have You deſign'd
A Pair ſo beauteous, and not made Them kind!

In *Both* alaſs! are Charms too great eſpied,
In *Both* alaſs! too great a Share of Pride:
In murd'rous Arts they take a ſavage Joy,
Shine but to wound, and charm but to deſtroy.
But ceaſe, preſumptuous Muſe! nor boldly dare
In plaintive Verſe prophane the ſacred Fair!
What impious Wretch durſt *Heav'n* ungrateful call,
Becauſe his Oraiſons unheeded fall!
'Tis thus, like *Heav'n*, Their Empire They main-
[tain,
They may afflict, but Man muſt not complain!

Theſe, and a Thouſand more, adorn'd the Place,
All *Britiſh* born, with more than Mortal Grace;
Fair *Venus'* choiceſt Gifts They well may claim,
Sprung from That *Brutus* who from *Venus* came.

O'er

O'er *Merton* Walks, high in her glittering Car
The *Goddeſs* ſate to view each blooming Fair;
The *Sun* deſcending ſhot a harmleſs Ray,
Yet glorious ſtill; the *Zephyrs* gently play;
Before her Eyes unnumber'd *Beauties* paſt,
All Heav'nly bright; when *Mira* came at laſt:
Gods! what amazing Charms did Then appear!
Her Looks how ſweet! how graceful ev'ry Air!
What Shape! what Geſture! what Majeſtic Mien!
She look'd a Goddeſs, and She mov'd a Queen!
The *Cyprian Pow'r*, ſince firſt She bleſs'd the Light,
Ne'er ſaw a Face ſo ſweet, a Form ſo bright;
Scarce *That* ſo fair, which the reflecting Wave,
The Winds then huſh'd, of *Infant Beauty* gave,
When Crowds of *Nereids* round Her wond'ring [ſtood
To ſee a *Venus* riſing from the Flood.

" And is there then (ſurpriz'd the Goddeſs ſaid
When She had All the lovely Fair ſurvey'd)
" And is there then *Below* a Form ſo bright!
" A Face ſo charming! ſo Divine a Sight!
" May *Mortal* Beauties with th' *Immortal* vie,
" And *Earth* tranſcend the Glories of the *Skie*!
" Still, ſtill, ſhall ſtubborn *Man* my Pow'r adore,
" And, *Venus* abſent, *Mira*'s Aid implore;
" Her Eyes alone my Empire can maintain,
" By *Her* I conquer, and by *Her* I reign;
" Secure in *Her* I ſeek the Realms Above;
" Henceforth let *Mira* be the *Queen* of *Love*!

She ſpoke --- and mounting thro' the yielding [Air
Her milk-white Doves convey'd her ſhining Car:

The

The little *Cupids* ſtill on *Mira* wait,
And as She ſmiles or frowns direct our Fate.

Who has not hear'd of the *Idalian* Grove,
Fit Seat of Beauty, bliſsful Scene of Love?
Alcinous' Gardens? or *Armida's* Bow'rs
(Immortal Landskips, ever blooming Flow'rs!)
Where Young *Rinaldo*, fir'd with Beauty's Charms,
Forgot the World in bright *Armida's* Arms,
Melting in Joys the panting Warrior lay,
And loſt to Glory lov'd his Hours away?
O! *Merton*! cou'd I ſing in equal Lays,
Not *Theſe* alone ſhou'd boaſt *Eternal* Praiſe;
Thy ſoft Receſſes, and thy cool Retreats,
Of *Albion's* brighter Nymphs the bliſsful Seats,

Like

Like *Them* for ever green, for ever young,
Shou'd bloom for ever in Poetick Song.
Let Others, Foes to Love, by Day, by Night,
With Toil drudge o'er the mighty *Stagyrite*;
Skill'd in Debates plead better at the Bar,
Or wage with nicer Arts the *Pulpit* War;
In loftier Strains, and all the Pomp of Verſe,
Th' imagin'd Heroe's fancied Acts rehearſe,
With mock Encomiums grace ſome Pageant King,
Of Conqueſts feign'd, and mimic Triumphs ſing;
Be *This*, my Muſe, thy no leſs glorious Care,
To ſing Love's Joys, and celebrate the Fair;
In living Verſe each radiant Charmer's Name
Tranſmit Immortal down the Liſts of Fame:
Go on, my Muſe, nor dread the Task, tho' hard;
Soft Beauty is the Poet's juſt Reward!

Beauty

Beauty, and *Wit*, each other's Aid require,
'Tis only Love can raiſe the ſacred Fire,
By *Love* inſpir'd the *Poet* hopes to live,
While *Verſe* alone can Life to *Beauty* give:
Had *Waller* never felt each Heav'nly Flame,
Who e'er had hear'd of *Sachariſſa*'s Name?
Yet ſtill She lives in his Immortal Lines,
And as at *Pens-Hurſt* in his Verſe She ſhines.

O! *Mira*! might I hope at laſt to find
The glorious Prize, the charming *Mira* kind,
Laſting, as *Waller*'s ſhou'd my Numbers be,
And beauteous *Sachariſſa* yield to *Thee*.

FINIS.

...nity, and Wit, each other's Aid require,
...is only Love can raise the Sacred Fire,
...y Love inspir'd the Poet hopes to live,
...While Verse alone can Life to Beauty give:
...And Wit, never felt each Heav'nly Flame,
...Why ev'ry Maid hopes Sacharissa's Name;
...et Still She lives in his Immortal Lines,
...nd as at Vera Mary in his Verse She Shines.

O! Mira! might I hope at last to find
...he glorious Prize, the charming Mira kind,
...afting, as Waller's Sacharissa be,
...And beauteous Mira yield to Thee.

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